CLAIMS

I claim:

1. In a computer controlled data browsing apparatus having a display, a user interface and a computer-network interface, the computer controlled data browsing apparatus being for use by a user and being capable of browsing hyperlinked data, a method for data browsing comprising the steps of:

enabling the user to specify at least one characteristic for monitoring data requests;

monitoring data requests generated via the user interface and transmitted via the computer-network interface, said monitoring step performed such that, when a download of a data file, requested by a file request being one of the data requests, is temporarily delayed, the data file is identified as currently unavailable;

backgrounding the download of the data file identified as currently unavailable in said monitoring step, said backgrounding step occurring automatically upon the data file being identified as currently unavailable in said monitoring step, and whereby said backgrounding step enables immediate continued browsing of data already made observable by the data requests; and

making the data file available to the user via the user interface once the download of the data file is completed.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said enabling step further comprises enabling the user to select to monitor all data requests in said monitoring step.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said enabling step further comprises enabling the user to individually select which data requests to monitor in said monitoring step.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein selection of which data requests to monitor is initiated by right clicking on a link associated with the data file to be downloaded.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said enabling step further comprises enabling the user to determine which types of delays in downloading data files are considered temporary.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said enabling step further comprises enabling the user to download definitions of which types of delays are considered temporary.

7. In a computer controlled data browsing apparatus having a display, a user interface and a computer-network interface, the computer controlled data browsing apparatus being for use by a user and being capable of browsing hyperlinked data, a method for data browsing comprising the steps of:

monitoring data requests generated via the user interface and transmitted via the computer-network interface, said monitoring step performed such that, when a download of a data file, requested by a file request being one of the data requests, is temporarily delayed, the data file is identified as currently unavailable;

backgrounding the download of the data file identified as currently unavailable in said monitoring step, said backgrounding step occurring automatically upon the data file being identified as currently unavailable in said monitoring step, and whereby said backgrounding step enables immediate continued browsing of data already made observable by the data requests; and

making the data file available to the user via the user interface once the download of the data file is completed, said making step including generating a new instance of the user interface in which to display the data file if needed.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said generating step is not needed if the user has created a new instance of the user interface as part of the data request for the data file identified as being currently unavailable.

9. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of providing the user with the option to select to skip the step of generating a new instance of the user interface for displaying the data file identified as being currently unavailable.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein said generating step is needed only if downloading of the data file identified as being currently unavailable is successfully completed.

11. The method of claim 7 wherein progress of downloading the data file is displayed on the new instance of the user interface.

12. The method of claim 7 wherein said generating step further comprises the step of bringing an original instance of the user interface to the foreground after the new instance of the user interface is generated.

13. In a computer controlled data browsing apparatus having a display, a user interface and a computer-network interface, the computer controlled data browsing apparatus being for use by a user and being capable of browsing hyperlinked data, a method for data browsing comprising the steps of:

monitoring data requests generated via the user interface and transmitted via the computer-network interface, said monitoring step performed such that, when a download of a data file, requested by a file request being one of the data requests, is temporarily delayed, the data file is identified as currently unavailable;

backgrounding the download of the data file identified as currently unavailable in said monitoring step, said backgrounding step occurring automatically upon the data file being identified as currently unavailable in said monitoring step, and whereby said backgrounding step enables immediate continued browsing of data already made observable by the data requests; and

requesting the data file in a continuing fashion when download of the data file is temporarily delayed such that additional data requests for the data file are generated as needed.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of making the data file available to the user via the user interface once the download of the data file is completed.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein said requesting step is performed after a period of time has elapsed without a response.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the period of time varies with a number of additional data requests having been sent.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein said requesting step further comprises the step of enabling the user to select a maximum number of additional data requests to be sent in a continuing fashion.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of notifying the user when the maximum number of additional requests have been sent without the data file being downloaded.

19. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of generating a new instance of the user interface in which to display the data file when the data file is identified as being currently unavailable, and eliminating the new instance of the user interface when the maximum number of additional requests have been sent without the download of the data file being completed.

20. The method of claim 13 wherein said requesting step further comprises the steps of determining if the data file includes discrete sub-elements, and if so, determining which sub-elements have not been received, and generating requests for the sub-elements that have not been received.